

Redskins Have a Field (Goal) Day in 26-16 Win | SPORTS, Page E1

The Washington Post

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2004

Weather
Today: Cloudy, windy, late
further. High 46, Low 22.
Tonight: Partly sunny,
windy. High 28, Low 17.
Details, Page C12

12PM Year No. 14 M2 DC MD VA

Inside Seat Work TV Week,
The Post Magazine, Comics
Today's Contents on Page A2
\$1.50

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PREGNANCY AND HOMICIDE | The Unknown Toll

Many New or Expectant Mothers Die Violent Deaths

Their killings produced only a few headlines, but across the country in the past decade, hundreds of pregnant women and new mothers have been slain. Even as Scott Peterson's trial became a public fascination, little was said about how often it happens, why, and whether it is a fluke or a social syndrome.

First of three articles

By DOMINA ST. GEORGE
Washington Post Staff Writer

Their deaths passed quietly. Tara Chambers, 29, was gunned down on a June morning inside her North Carolina home. Rebecca Johnson, 16, was shot in the chest as she sat in a pickup truck in Oklahoma. Ana Diaz, 28, was killed in a parking lot in Redon as she stopped to get a friend on their way to work.

They all were pregnant, with futures that seemed sure to unfold over many years. One was a nurse's assistant who planned to name her daughter T'Kaira. Another had just bought a house. The youngest was a high school cheerleader.

Charles Adams was shot to death in 1999 when she was eight months pregnant. The father, former pro football star Bo Carnell, is in prison for conspiracy.

See DEATHS, A20, Col. 1



Name: Christina Colon
Age: 24

How she died: Shot this year in Pennsylvania, where her boyfriend is awaiting trial. She was five months pregnant.



Name: Shawndra Fulton
Age: 21

How she died: Shot last month in Fairfax County. Prosecutors are seeking an indictment against her boyfriend, who has been arrested on other charges. Fulton was eight months pregnant.



Name: Ashley Lyons
Age: 18

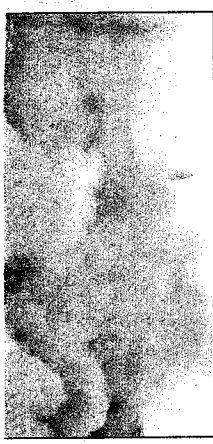
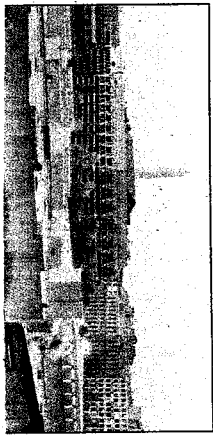
How she died: Lured to a park in Kentucky by her ex-boyfriend, who shot her. She was found sitting in the driver's seat of her car. She was 5 1/2 months pregnant.



One Guarantee Sparked Larger Baseball Battle

\$19 Million Penalty Fueled
Resentment on D.C. Council

At Old D.C. Convention Center, a Disappearing Act



3 More Held in Charles Arsons

One Had Interest

PREGNANCY AND HOMICIDE | *The Unknown Toll*

Homicide Is Found To Be Major Cause Of Maternal Death

DEATHS, From A1

Post of death-record data in states across the country documents the killings of 1,367 pregnant women and new mothers since 1990. This is only part of the national toll, because no reliable system is in place to track such cases.

Largely invisible, it is a phenomenon that is as consequential as it is poorly understood. Even in the past two years—as the Laci Peterson homicide case has become a public fascination, with a jury last week recommending that her husband, Scott, be sentenced to death in her killing—little has been said about the larger convergence of pregnancy and homicide: how often it happens, why, and whether it is a fluke or a social syndrome.

In the Washington region alone, at least three pregnant women have been killed in the past seven weeks—one in St. Mary's County, a second in Minnesota, a third in Fairfax County. Another pregnant woman was found slain Thursday in Missouri.

Until recently, many of the cases have gone virtually unnoticed, uncounted, untraced. Police agencies across the country do not regularly ask about maternal status when they investigate homicides. And health experts have focused historically on the medical complications of pregnancy—embolism, hemorrhage, infection—not on fetal violence.

"It's very hard to connect the dots when you don't even see the dots," said Elaine Albert, a public health expert at Boston University. "It's only just starting to be recognized that there is a trend or any commonalities between these deaths."

The Post's analysis shows that the killings span racial and ethnic groups. In cases whose details were known, 67 percent of women were killed with firearms. Many women were slain at home—in bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens—usually by men they knew. Husbands. Boyfriends. Lovers.

changed its death certificate process to include a female victim's maternity status, but no data are available yet. In the nation's most populous state, no one can say how many pregnant women like Peterson have been killed.

Three weeks after Peterson disappeared in Modesto, Quinisha Thomas lost her life in Sacramento, 80 miles away. Eight months pregnant, Thomas, 18, was walking home from a grocery store when her ex-boyfriend shot her in the head execution-style because, prosecutors said, he believed fatherhood would get in the way of his music career. "This was a big major inconvenience for him," prosecutor Mark Curry said. Other states that say they have no way of counting pregnant and postpartum homicides include Arizona, where Melinda Gonzalez, 20, was found dead in a park when she was three months pregnant, and Pennsylvania, where Christina Cohn, 24, five months pregnant, was shot and found dead in a quarry.

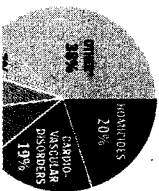
Cara Krutewich, a University of Maryland researcher who has studied maternal deaths in the District and Maryland, contended that states are not to blame so much as the lack of a national focus.

The FBI collects comprehensive homicide statistics but does not look at pregnancy. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tracks maternal health but has no uniform way of monitoring maternal killings.

Maternal Deaths

Homicide is the leading cause of death for a pregnant or recently pregnant woman, according to a 2001 Maryland study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Breakdown of 247 maternal deaths in Maryland from any cause, 1993-1998



"The system is flawed," Krutewich said. In Maryland, which keeps track of cases better than most states, slightly more than 10 percent of all homicides among women ages 14 to 44 happened to a pregnant or postpartum woman in the past decade. If that held true nationally, it would suggest about 295 maternal homicides nationwide a year.

THE VICTIMS

CHERRICA ADAMS DASHUNDA ARMSTRONG ■ TAMMY BAKER TABITHA JO BELL
 ■ SHANNON BROE ■ ZANEITA BROWNE SHANEQUA CARPENTER
 SHANNEKA COBEY ■ YOLANDA COLES CHRISTINA COLON SHIRLITTA COLON
 STILENA DALTON DESTINY DAVIS MONICA DEHAVEN ANA DIAZ
 SHAMEKA FLUDD MELIESHA FRANCIS AMANDA FRANKLIN SHAWNDRÉ FULTON
 LORI HACKING MICHELLE HARLAN SARAH HARVEY ■ MARTYN HASSAN
 ESPERANZA HERNANDEZ ■ EVELYN HERNANDEZ LISA HERNANDEZ



1. SHANNON BROE; 2. CHERRICA ADAMS; 3. DASHUNDA ARMSTRONG; 4. AMANDA FRANKLIN; 5. LORI HACKING; 6. SARAH HARVEY; 7. MICHELLE HARLAN; 8. SHANEKA COBEY; 9. YOLANDA COLES; 10. CHRISTINA COLON; 11. SHIRLITTA COLON. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM. THE NAMES AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOTOS ARE NOT NECESSARILY IN THE ORDER THEY APPEARED IN THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS. THE NAMES ARE NOT NECESSARILY IN THE ORDER THEY APPEARED IN THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS. THE NAMES ARE NOT NECESSARILY IN THE ORDER THEY APPEARED IN THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.

WOMEN VICTIMS
Many women were slain at home—in bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens—usually by men they knew. Hundreds of friends, neighbors, and family members were left to grieve.

The cases are not commonplace compared with other homicides but are more frequent than most people know—and have changed the way some experts think about pregnancy.

Five years ago in Maryland, state health researchers Isabelle Horon and Dana Chang set out to study maternal deaths, using sophisticated methods to spot dozens of overlooked cases in their state. They assumed they would find more deaths from medical complications than the state's statistics showed. The last thing they expected was murder.

But in their study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2001, they wrote that in Maryland, "a pregnant or recently pregnant woman is more likely to be a victim of homicide than to be of any other cause."

It was a huge surprise," said Horon, who recalls paperwork covering the researchers' kitchen tables on weekends and evenings as they sought to understand the astonishing numbers. "We thought we had to have made a mistake. We kept checking and checking and rechecking."

Their findings, as it turned out, were no error. Homicide accounted for 50 of 247 maternal deaths in Maryland over a six-year period—more than 20 percent. It had caused more deaths than cardiovascular disorders, embolisms or accidents.

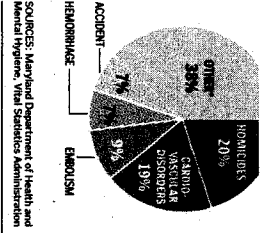
"People have this misconception that pregnancy is a safe haven," Chang said. Building upon the Maryland study and others, The Post contacted 50 states and the District for all possible data about maternal deaths during pregnancy or postpartum months. Few states track homicides in a comprehensive way, but many states could provide some data, mostly from death certificates. The Post combined what it collected with cases culled from other sources.

The resulting 1,367 maternal homicides took place over 14 years.

"That's a formidable number—and that's just the tip," said Judith McFarlane, who studies violence and pregnancy at Texas Woman's University and who described the void of reliable numbers as "embarrassing." She observed, "You can't address a problem that we don't document. You can't reduce them. You can't prevent them. In essence, they don't exist."

In all, 13 states said they had no way of telling how many pregnant and postpartum women had been killed in recent years.

The states included California, where the Peterson case has flashed across television screens and filled newspaper columns since Christmas Eve 2002, when Laci Peterson, eight months pregnant, was reported missing. Her body was discovered in San Francisco Bay in April 2003.



SOURCE: Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, FBI National Center for Statistics

nonpregnant. It probably was always there, but we just didn't know."

The homicides documented by The Post happened in small mountain towns, in tough urban neighborhoods, in quiet suburban subdivisions. The women who died included a college student, a popular waitress, an actress, a church volunteer, a mother of three, a Navy petty officer, an immigrant housekeeper, a businesswoman, a high school athlete, an Army captain, a minister's wife, a Head Start teacher.

More than 100 were teenagers, barely beyond their own girlfriends.

Many already had children—now left behind.

In Tennessee, Kay Briggs found a letter in her mailbox several days after her pregnant daughter was slain in Chesapeake, Va. It was her daughter's photograph, a beaming Melissa O'Connell, showing off her protruding abdomen. The 33-year-old mother-to-be had mailed it before her husband choked her to death.

"She tried for some time to get pregnant, and it wasn't happening," her mother recalled. "She wanted the baby more than anything."

Cases From 2002

One recent year of homicides—2002—was examined in greater detail to get a closer look at how and why the cases happened. For a group of 72 homicides in 24 states, The Post interviewed family members, friends, prosecutors and police. The analysis showed that nearly two-thirds of the cases had a strong relation to pregnancy or involved a domestic-violence clash in which pregnancy may have been a factor.

The dead included Cecilia Stewart-McKinnis, 23, a college student in Richmond who was beaten to death by her boyfriend. The couple had dated on and off for years, and she had had abortions previously, prosecutors said. This time, he was married—and she refused to end her pregnancy.

Today

The Post researchers are just beginning to discover what has been a hidden risk of pregnancy. Pregnant women and new mothers are more likely to be victims of homicide than to be of any single racial cause, several statewide studies have shown.

LETAL HOMICIDE

homicide a year. Jacquelyn Campbell of Johns Hopkins University said the number of cases has surprised her, even after her many years of research on women's homicides. Although she knew of pregnant homicide victims, she said, "I thought it was a tragedy. I didn't think it was a trend."

Now, she has come to believe: "It's a job we just didn't know."

The Post researchers are just beginning to discover what has been a hidden risk of pregnancy. Pregnant women and new mothers are more likely to be victims of homicide than to be of any single racial cause, several statewide studies have shown.

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ESPERANZA HERNANDEZ EVELYN HERNANDEZ LISA HERNANDEZ

MANAR JABER LATOYA JACKSON SHELLY JACKSON TRINA JENNINGS

TOMEKA LEWIS ELIZABETH LILLARD RACHEL LUNKINS ASHLEY LYONS

RENDE MORRIS TARA MURPHY MONALISA NAVA MELISSA O'CONNELL

TAMNIKA POWELL CHAVANNA PRATHER DEANNE PRICHARD

RONDA ROBINSON DEMARIS VALENTIN ROMAN TAMMY ROSE-CUTLEY

CAROLYN SIMPSON ILARIA SOLARZANO CEEATTA STEWART-MCKINNIE

QUINNISHA THOMAS QUWANDA THORNTON MONICA TRICE

CURRIE-HILL VELLE CHRISTY WALLER ROBYN WILLIAMS

nancy. Turkey hunters found her blood-soaked body in the woods.

In Chicago, Chawanna Prather, 17, was a high school student who played basketball and worked part time at McDonald's. Prather became intimate with her manager at work, then became pregnant and asked for money for an abortion, police said. She was found dead in a river on the city's South Side. He awaits trial.

In Rochester, N.Y., Zaneta Browne, 29, was at odds with her married boyfriend about her pregnancy in 2002 when he shot her with a .22-caliber rifle. The killer and his wife secretly buried her on rural land hoping no one would find out. Browne left three children behind. She was nearly four months pregnant with twins.

Louis R. Mizell, who heads a firm that tracks incidents of crime and terrorism, observed that "when husbands or boyfriends attack pregnant partners, it usually has to do with an unwillingness to deal with fatherhood, marriage, child support or public scandal."

Young women may be more at risk than others, several statewide studies suggest—possibly because of more volatile relationships with young men or less money or greater uncertainty about parenthood. Of women whose cases were researched in detail, 16 of 72 were teenage victims—about one in five.

They included Vanessa Youngberg, a 16-year-old cheerleader in Oklahoma who was

nearly seven months pregnant when her ex-boyfriend, then 18, bludgeoned her with a shotgun. Witnesses said the boyfriend had not wanted to pay child support and had worried that he might face charges of statutory rape if authorities found out he had impregnated a minor.

In Nevada, Monalisa Nava was just 14 when she was gunned down—the same age as the ex-boyfriend who allegedly killed her. Nava was happily pregnant, her mother said, but unwilling to move with her boyfriend to Mexico, as he wanted. Police and family members say he shot her in front of her younger brothers as her mother dialed 911, and he has been on the run ever since.

At any age, "pregnancy is a huge, life-altering event for both the male and the female," said Pat Brown, a criminal profiler based in Minneapolis. "It is certainly a more dangerous moment in life. You are escalating people's responsibilities and curtailing their freedoms."

For some men, she said, the situation boils down to one set of unadorned facts: "If the woman doesn't want the baby, she can get an abortion. If the guy doesn't want it, he can't do a damn thing about it. He is stuck with a child for the rest of his life. He is stuck with child support for the rest of his life, and he's stuck with that woman for the rest of his life. If she goes away, the problem goes away."

In New Jersey, the trouble was not over whether to give birth but how to raise the

The Victims: As public health experts focus new attention on homicide during pregnancy, the Washington region has become a focal point. Research rarely casts light on the lives of those who were slain or how violence entered their lives at such a pivotal time.

The Legacy: The tragedy of maternal homicide lingers in the lives of children left behind, some of them born as their mothers were dying. Other things sometimes witness the violence. The children often must be raised by their grandparents.

twins that Marilyn Hassan, 29, a bank manager, was expecting. Her husband insisted that she convert to Islam before the babies were born. She was Hindu and "wanted her children to know both religions," her cousin said. He stabbed her to death in their home, then killed her sister and mother.

In Maryland, Kenia Balconer, 26, of Ikona Park was living with her fiancé, by whom she was seven months pregnant, when his other girlfriend, posing as a cosmetics saleswoman, came into her apartment and stabbed her. The deadly love triangle was intensified by the pregnancy, prosecutors said. Balconer's fiancé had decided to stay with her, and the couple had bought a home together a short time earlier.

In California, Kaye Raposa, 34, was nearly eight months pregnant when her husband drove the family's minivan off a 150-foot sea cliff. Prosecutors say he had a history of marital abuse and was fixated on whether the baby was his. Perhaps most of all, "his wife had talked about leaving him, and he wasn't going to let that happen," said Jim Fox, San Mateo County district attorney. The crash killed Raposa and her 4-year-old daughter. Her husband survived and is awaiting trial.

Although maternal homicide is only recently drawing notice, considerable research has been done on battering of pregnant women. Studies go back 20 years, and many experts have come to agree that 4 percent to 8 percent of pregnant women—160,000 to 320,000 a year—are physically hurt by husbands, boyfriends or partners.

Research shows that for more than 70 percent of abused women, pregnancy does little to change the status quo. For a smaller group, pregnancy brings a peaceful period, when abuse stops. But that is mostly offset by a third group: the 27 percent for whom domestic abuse starts during pregnancy.

Some experts conclude that pregnancy is more "protective" than dangerous, but McFarlane, of Texas Woman's University,

PREGNANCY AND HOMICIDE | The Unknown Toll



4. WEEZY'S GROOMING IMAGES BY AMERICA'S HOT SHEET; 5. CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW PARENTS; 6. THE NEW PARENTS; 7. THE NEW PARENTS; 8. THE NEW PARENTS; 9. THE NEW PARENTS; 10. THE NEW PARENTS; 11. THE NEW PARENTS; 12. THE NEW PARENTS.

The following names represent just a fraction of the women in this country who have been slain while they were pregnant or in the months after giving birth. Many similar deaths go uncounted.

- | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| ROSHEENNA BLAINE | ERSKALA BLAKELY | KRYSTAL BOBISH | REBECCA BOLYARD |
| ARDENA CARTER | TARA CHAMBERS | ISHA CHRISTIAN | LATOYA COAKES |
| SUZANNE COMBS | KEENYA COOK | SHERRY CULP | DEBRA CUMMINGS |
| ANITA DICKSON | TAMARA DUNSTAN | VICTORIA EVANS | KENNIS FALCONER |
| LEAH GEE | MELINDA GONZALEZ | RACHEL GOOD | APRIL GREER |
| CHEMICKA HAWKINS | GINGER HAYES | LAURA HELTON | ALICESON HERNANDEZ |
| ANGIE JONES | HUI MING | ATICA LUYTTI | ANITTA LUYTTI |
| | | | CITANIA LUYTTI |

Researchers Stunned By Scope of Slayings

Further Studies Needed, Most Agree

By DONNA SR. GEORGE
Washington Post Staff Writer

In the mid-1990s, Cara Krulwich sat in a dark, cramped file room in the office of the D.C. medical examiner, poring over autopsies for days that became weeks, then months. She was an epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, assigned to the District.

Krulwich wanted to see whether maternal deaths were being undercounted, as was common elsewhere across the country. Granted access to confidential death files, she assumed she would find more deaths from medical complications of pregnancy—embolism, infection, hemorrhage—than anyone knew.

What she stumbled upon instead was a surprising number of homicides: 13 of 30 maternal deaths, more than 40 percent. "I was just stunned," she recalled. "You assume it's a quirk in the numbers. A hiccup."

Krulwich dug into medical archives and came across a 1992 journal article from Chicago and a 1995 study from New York City. In both, homicide had emerged as a significant cause of maternal death. It was difficult for the uninitiated to comprehend: Were pregnant women being killed in notable numbers?

"I didn't understand it at all," said Krulwich, whose study was published in the *Journal of Maternity & Women's Health*.

Her research came at a time when maternal mortality rates in the United States had fallen a full 99 percent from the last century, with fewer than 500 women a year dying of medical problems related to childbirth.

Health officials considered this a major achievement but also had set optimistic new goals to bring the death toll closer to what is called an irreducible minimum.

Still, there was a growing interest in doing a better job of capturing every possible case—and taking note of homicides, suicides, car accidents and drug overdoses. In the larger public health world, the "social" causes of death were increasingly viewed as an important health issue.

"For a long time, violence was not defined as a public health problem,"

of Boston University. "We need to look not only at all the contextual factors that may have contributed to a mother's death, but also look to compare details and see commonalities between these cases."

On the federal level, the CDC has done its first study of maternal homicide using national data to examine the risk by age, race and state of prenatal care. While that study awaits publication, CDC officials said they had no national numbers on maternal homicide but did release a slide presentation, which reported 281 cases in 16 southern states and the District from 1991 to 1997.

The CDC has started a program to compile and analyze detailed characteristics about violent deaths across the country—the National Violent Death Reporting System—but it does not uniformly note maternal status in homicides.

In the latest wave of research, experts have used an expanded definition of what qualifies as deaths associated with pregnancy—up to 12 months postpartum—with the idea that some troubles surface after pregnancy ends. Postpartum depression, for example, may play a role in suicide cases. Likewise, homicides can be related to the "chain of events" started by a pregnancy.

In a CDC study of postpartum mothers, those younger than 20 were almost three times as likely to be homicide victims as their counterparts who were not recently pregnant.

Health experts say the better they understand maternal homicide, the better they can tailor efforts to prevent harm during that pivotal time. Most women see doctors repeatedly during pregnancy—when, the thinking goes, there is a chance to help.

"It's a time when women are open, they are very receptive to information, and they are interested in protecting their children," said researcher Judith McFarlane of Texas Woman's University.

Some criminologists, such as Neil Websdale of Northern Arizona University, say there is a risk in overstating the problem. Websdale pointed out that more than 1,000 women a year are killed in domestic clashes, the overwhelming majority of whom are not pregnant. But lack

LEAH GEE ■ MELINDA GONZALEZ ■ RACHEL GOOD APRIL GREER

CHEMICKA HAWKINS ■ GINGER HAYES LAURA HELTON ALCESON HERNANDEZ

ANGELIQUE HOLMES ALISA HOTTE ANTICA HURT CHANTAL IZZARD

REBECCA JOHNSON CHAUNTAE JONES THELMA JONES PEARLINA LAPORTE

BRANDY MARTIN ■ JENNY MCMECHEN AMY LOU MCRAE LAUREL MORRIS

DAMITA OGLESBY KARI OSTERHAUG ■ BRENDA PAZ ■ LACI PETERSON

DEBORAH RANDALL ■ RAYE RAPOZA ■ KERRY REPP EVA ROBINETTE

AMY SABBH-SWIFT HEATHER SARGENT KATHERINE SCHADLER

MARLA TABB ■ LATOYA TAYLOR ■ KATHLEEN TERRY GWENDOLYN THOMAS

DESTRIAN TURNER ROSA UMANA GABRIELA VACA SALAS

■ TASHA WINTERS ■ VANESSA YOUNGBEAR

maintains that it goes both ways. "It can be a protective time for an abused woman, but it also can be a very vulnerable time," she said, recounting stories of women who were afraid to even tell a husband or boyfriend they were pregnant.

Many women endure hitting and shoving in pregnancy—or choking and threats to kill—because they want their child to have a father, or because they feel financially dependent or too vulnerable to break away. Some believe a baby will ease the tension.

The analysis of 72 deaths in 2002 shows that nearly 30 percent were caused by violence that did not seem related to child-bearing, drug dealing, robberies, errand-running.

A total of 15 cases started with a missing-person report—and ended with a body discovered in a remote field or woods. Near Hiram, N.Y., a body was found, with no missing-person report. The woman had been seven months pregnant.

As analyst Mizel said, "You have to wonder how many missing-person cases happened because she was pregnant."

The Killers

Tammy Baker, 24, was a well-liked bookkeeper who lived in an apartment in Louisiana, 30 miles east of Charleston, when she met Coleman "Miles" Johnson Jr., a contractor on a repair job at a nearby nuclear power plant.

The two hit it off for a time, then parted ways. One day, Baker called him to say she was pregnant and intended to have the baby. They argued repeatedly by phone, recalls Tracy Ryder, a friend of Baker's. He did not want a baby, nor did he want any child support obligations. But Baker did not change her mind.

By the time Baker was eight months pregnant, she had chosen a name, Savannah, and decorated a room for the baby girl she was expecting; she worked two jobs to

How the Series Was Reported

The Washington Post asked every state and the District for any data it had collected since 1990 on traumatic deaths of pregnant and postpartum women. Methods for identifying cases varied widely from state to state, and few could be sure they knew of all or even most cases.

Half the states were able to provide more than eight years of data, mostly based on death record notations or by linking various state records, or both. Twelve other states provided more limited information. Nearly all data collected were given without names.

When it was possible and legally permissible, The Post pieced together the identities of victims and did further research and interviews to identify trends and patterns. The newspaper independently found cases through medical examiners, newspaper archives and interviews.

save money. But the conflict with Johnson never went away. On Dec. 3, 1997, Baker stooped down for what looked like a mislaid garage can lid outside her apartment door.

Beneath the lid were two pipe bombs. Baker was killed instantly in the explosion, which literally shook the earth in Louisiana, and people in the small town found it hard to imagine. Who would kill a pregnant woman?

"He did it for money," said Assistant U.S.

Attorney Tom Bondurant. "He didn't want to pay child support."

As in other cases, Johnson at first denied it was his child, then pressed for an abortion, then plotted murder.

"It seems to me that these guys hope against hope for a miscarriage or an abortion, but when everything else fails, they take the life of the woman to avoid having the baby," said Jack Levin of Northeastern University.

Ashley Lyons, 18, faced a similar horror in a park near her old high school in Kentucky early this year—on the day she went to her doctor for an ultrasound and learned she would be having a boy. She was 22 weeks along.

She had already picked out a name, London, and created a baby journal. As one entry gave way to another, she confided her ex-boyfriend's opposition to the pregnancy. Still, she wrote, "You are the child I have always dreamed about. . . . I know it will be a long time before I meet you, but I can't wait to hold you for the first time."

Excited by the ultrasound Jan. 7, Lyons made plans to show the fetal pictures to her ex-boyfriend, Roger McBeath Jr., 22. She let her family's home, telling her mother she would be back for dinner. But when her father and brother found her, she was sitting in her parked car—with the car engine running and the headlights on.

She had been shot twice in the head and once in the neck. In her lap was her handbag—laid open—with the ultrasound picture inside, her father said.

"He knew that if she had that baby that she would be in his life forever, and he didn't want that," said prosecutor Shawna Jewell.

On a cold Kentucky afternoon four days later, Lyons was buried with her tiny baby tucked into her arms.

Staff writer David S. Falis and staff researcher Bobbie Pratt contributed to this report.

ery possible case—and taking note of homicides, suicides, car accidents and drug overdoses. In the larger public health world, the "social" causes of death were increasingly viewed as an important health issue.

"For a long time, violence was not defined as a public health problem," said Jacquelyn Campbell, who studies domestic homicides at Johns Hopkins University.

Even now, studies that analyze maternal homicide are relatively rare.

One of the most comprehensive studies came from Maryland, where researchers used an array of case-spotting methods, expecting to find more medical deaths than the state knew about. Instead they discovered that homicide was the leading cause of death, a finding published in 2001 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

In 2002, Massachusetts weighed in with a study that also showed homicide as the top cause of maternal death, followed by cancer. Two of three homicides involved domestic violence. "This is clearly a major health problem for women," said Angela Nannini, who led the study. Still, many questions remain unanswered.

"We don't even know what we don't know yet," said Elaine Alpert

Some criminologists, such as Neil Websdale of Northern Arizona University, say there is a risk in overstating the problem. Websdale pointed out that more than 1,000 women a year are killed in domestic

clashes, the overwhelming majority of whom are not pregnant. But Jack Levin of Northeastern University stressed the counterpoint. "This should not have to become an epidemic to get the public's attention," he said.

Determining the precise risk of homicide for new and expectant mothers is not easy, said researcher Isabelle Horon, because the number of pregnancies in a year is unclear. In Maryland, Horon and her co-author instead ranked leading causes of death. Homicide came in fifth for all Maryland women ages 14 to 44 who had not been recently pregnant. For those who were or had been recently pregnant, homicide was first.

After making statistical adjustments for age and race, the Maryland researchers found that pregnant women and new mothers were still almost twice as likely to die of homicide as their counterparts who had not recently been pregnant.

Staff researcher Bobbie Pratt contributed to this report.

Profile of the Victims

The Washington Post documented 1,367 maternal homicides since 1990, though that number is far from complete because so many states do not track such deaths. The information was inconsistent, but for many of the victims, the following characteristics could be determined:

Age
Of 824 deaths for which age could be determined:

17 AND UNDER	10%
18-24	50%
25-30	31%
31-35	8%
36-40	1%
41 AND OLDER	1%

Race
Based on 1,122 deaths for which race could be determined, figures for Hispanics were incomplete.

BLACK	51%
WHITE	46%
ASIAN	1%
NATIVE AMERICAN	1%
OTHER	1%

Education
Based on 788 deaths for which education could be determined:

LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	42%
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	36%
SOME COLLEGE OR BETTER	22%

Marital status
Based on 917 deaths for which marital status was known:

NOT MARRIED	64%
MARRIED	36%

*Includes separated, divorced, widowed

Method of homicide
Based on 937 deaths for which method could be determined:

PISTOL	67%
SHARP OBJECT	13%
STRANGULATION	7%
BURNING OBJECT	2%
OTHER	2%

SOURCE: State records

THE WASHINGTON POST

Each week in Baghdad, sermons to the faithful offer a tale of two Fridays. Both sermons—one Sunni, the other Shiite—dwell

Sharing little, the sermons leave scant

clothes and seated before a wall, were broad-

See IRAQ, A18, Col. 1

PREGNANCY AND HOMICIDE | *The Missing Stories*

Violence Intersects Lives of Promise

Relatives and Friends Evoke the Women and Their Paths Toward Death

Second of three articles

By DONNA ST. GEORGE
Washington Post Staff Writer

On a Saturday night when her sisters tried to persuade her to go out on the town, Shamecka Pludd stayed home. Her workweek had been hectic—tending children at a Laurel day-care center, then staying late on Friday to clean up. She was three months pregnant and lately more tired than usual.

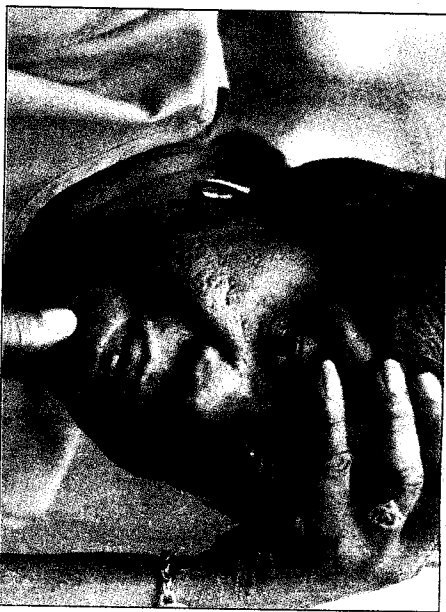
Her suburban apartment in Columbia was comfortable, set on a tree-shrouded slope in a winding complex of similar units—a long way from the troubled District neighborhoods where



single mother would have chosen if life always happened according-

ing to wishes and plans. But she could not bear to have an abortion, she told friends. After five years as a day-care teacher, children had become her calling.

"You don't have to have anything to do with the baby," she told the father.



BY RUANA APÉLAS—THE WASHINGTON POST

Lorena Saines is raising the 9-year-old son of her granddaughter, Shaneta Fudd, who was fatally shot in her Columbia apartment by the father of her unborn child.

But Tyane Marshall was already a father of two and said a baby would ruin his life. Fladd later told her sisters. His objections upset her, they said. But she did not change her mind.

The couple's clash of wills ended unexpectedly for Fludd in the dark morning hours of May 4, 2003.

That night, her children had stayed with relatives. Fludd was alone, lying in her bed, in a nightgown, prosecutors say, when Marshall dropped by her apartment and asked again about the pregnancy. On the floor near her bed

Only recently, research has begun to show that cases like Shameka Fludd's are far more common than anyone might have guessed. And as public

See DEATHS, A6, Col. 3

INSIDE

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Rain Forest Remade By a Decade of Fires

Massive fires have reshaped the habitat on much of Borneo, changing water levels in rivers and the air's humidity, and affecting which animals can recover

SCIENCE, Page A10

Surprise Bidder Buys Key Unit of Yukos Oil

An unknown company purchased a major unit of the oil giant Yukos. A state-controlled firm did not bid, but analysts questioned the Kremlin's role.

WORLD, Page A17

More Aggressive Congress Could Hinder Bush's Plans

*By JIM VANDEHEI
and CHARLES BARINGTON
Washington Post Staff Writers*

President Bush's second-term plans to reshape Social Security, immigration laws and other domestic programs are facing a stiff challenge from a group that was reliably accommodating in the president's first four years: congressional Republicans.

After essentially rubber-stamping much of Bush's first-term agenda, many House and Senate Republicans plan to assert themselves more forcefully to put their mark on domestic policy in the new year, according to several lawmakers.

House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (Tex.) has privately criticized White House

See *BUSH, A14, Col. 1*

See BUSH, A14, Col. 1

Evangelicals Use Courts to Fight Restrictions on Christmas Tiddings

By ALAN COOPERMAN
Washington Post Staff Writer

Jonathan Morgan handed out candy canes with the story of Jesus to his fourth-grade classmates in Plano, Tex., on Friday. But it took a court order.

After years of legal assaults on municipal displays of Nativity scenes and Christmas observances in public schools, Christian groups are now mounting court challenges in the other direction.

From Mustang, Okla., to Maplewood, N.J., they are filing or threatening lawsuits to win the inclusion of manger scenes in school plays, Christmas carols in school concerts and Christmas trees in public buildings.

"The pendulum has swung completely," said Charles Haynes, a senior scholar at the nonprofit First Amendment Center in Arlington. "There's a push-back by many conservative Christians, perhaps emboldened by the recent election and by the increasing presence of evangelical Christianity in the public arena. They're saying the secularization of our society and public schools has gone too far and become hostile to their religion."

Last year, a school administrator stopped Jonathan Morgan at the door to his classroom because the "goody bag" he had brought to a school party on the last day be-

See CHRISTMAS, A 16, Col. 1



BY JUAN GARCIA—DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Doug Morgan and son Jonathan Plano, Tex., show the kind of care he gave out at his school's "Win-

PREGNANCY AND HOMICIDE | The Missing Stories

States Add Penalties For Death of Unborn

Abortion Rights Activists See Measures As Attempt to Redefine When Life Begins

By DONNA ST. GEORGE
Washington Post Staff Writer

When Melissa O'Connell was strangled and beaten to death at nearly nine months pregnant in Chesapeake, prosecutors were asked repeatedly why it was not possible to file criminal charges for the killing of her fetus. Her husband stood trial on one count of murder.

Four years later—and partly because of her case—a law took effect in Virginia making fetal homicide, as many call it, a separate crime, punishable in a first-degree case by 20 years to life in prison.

That day, Virginia became the latest of about 30 states with such a law on its books.

Many of the laws—including a federal one—

signed by President Bush last spring—have been named or partly inspired by the Laci Peterson homicide in California.

The law in Virginia is called Conner's Law, in memory of the boy Peterson was expecting.

"All we had to do was mention the Laci Peterson case, and everyone got it," said Virginia Attorney General L. Roy S. Moore.

But the state's bill passed this year. "For some, it requires a case you can see."

The growing catalogue of state laws has opened another

sued in many statehouses has led to both passage and defeat. A Maryland bill, sponsored by state Sen. Leo E. Green (D-Prince George's), was killed in the Senate last spring. The District has no such law on its books, said Patricia Riley, special counsel to the U.S. attorney.

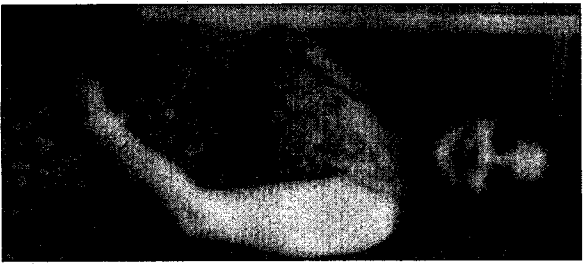
The federal bill that Bush signed covers harm to a fetus that occurs during the commission of a federal crime of violence.

In Maryland, Michael Rexroad, senior assistant state's attorney in Howard County, said he hoped the recent trial of Tyne Marshall would show the need for a law in his state.

Marshall was convicted in late October of shooting mother-to-be Shantika Plouff in a crime prosecutors said was intended to end her pregnancy.

"It was very frustrating for us not to be able to have a separate crime we could charge and not to be able to seek additional time for the separate crime of the death of a fetus," he said. Ending the pregnancy, he said, was "the absolute, clear-cut, manifest motive for this murder."

Jacquelyn Campbell, who studies domestic homicides at Johns Hopkins University, argued that whether good or bad, the law will not reduce maternal homicide. "These men are not thinking about whether they're going to do life or what the consequences might be," she

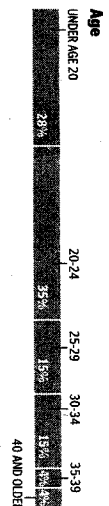


Melissa O'Connell was eight months pregnant when she was killed by

Maternal Homicide in the Washington Area

MARYLAND

State researchers published a study of maternal deaths in Maryland using data gathered between 1993 and 1998. The state also provided more recent statistics, bringing the number of homicide victims to 75. Among the findings:



Marital status



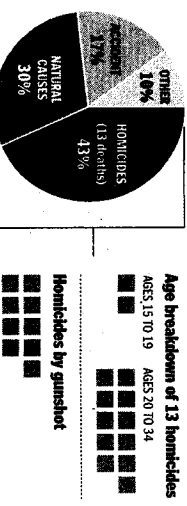
Education



NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

THE DISTRICT

Using confidential death files provided by the D.C. medical examiner's office, a field epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was able to study 30 maternal deaths between 1988 and 1996. They included women who died while pregnant or within 42 days of giving birth.

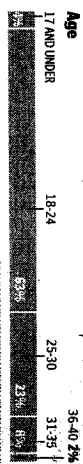


NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

SOURCES: Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health, Jan.-Feb. 2001; Virginia Department of Health

VIRGINIA

Based on statistics provided by the Virginia Center for Health Statistics, The Post examined 48 homicides of pregnant women and new mothers in the state since 1990. The state did not release names, but the data included some demographic characteristics. Further information gathered from news reports, prosecutors, police and family members gives a fuller picture of the victims and the crimes.

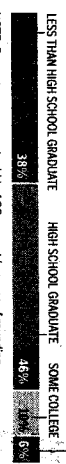


NOTE: Ethnicity was not consistently available.

Marital status



Education



NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

Method of homicide



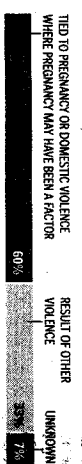
Location



Status of investigation



Circumstances of homicide



The legacy 68 Children left behind 29 Children near the scene or witnessed the crime

PREGNANCY AND HOMICIDE | *The Missing Stories*

DEATHS, From A6

eight men and four women: "He wanted to prevent her from having the child she desperately wanted to have" and "move on with his life without the inconvenience of having another baby, another child to support."

Two months ago, a jury convicted Marshall of first-degree murder. Sentencing was set for January.

Riudd's grandmother trembled visibly in the courtroom, surrounded by 11 relatives and friends. She is raising Riudd's son, now 9; Riudd's daughter, now 6, is with her father. "We got justice," she said quietly afterward. "That's all we wanted, and we got it. Shameka can rest in peace."

'With or Without Him'

Two hours from Columbia, Madonna Stewart has had 2½ years to think about her pregnant niece's killing outside Richmond one bleak night in April 2002. She has come to believe that maternal homicide is not an unusual crime but rather another form of the domestic violence that has harmed millions of women.

Her niece, Cearta Stewart-McKinnie, did not intend to get pregnant, Stewart recalled, but grew very attached to the idea of having the baby once she did. She had had abortions and decided not to do it again. But prosecutors say this put her at odds with the baby's father—a long-standing but on-again, off-again boyfriend.

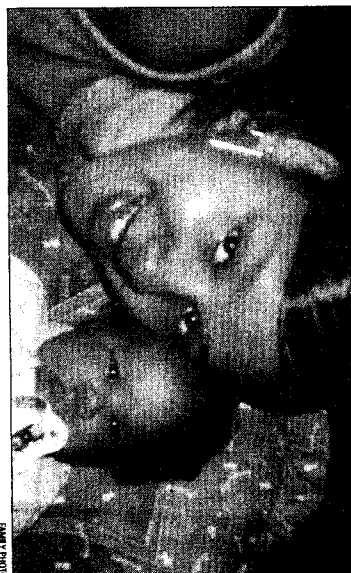
She just said she was doing it with or without him," her aunt remembered.

By then, Stewart-McKinnie was a junior in college, planning on a journalism career and working as a nurse's assistant to support herself. She liked poetry, once thought of herself as a budding actress and had gone to college determined to make good after a rough childhood. At 23, she felt she could manage motherhood.

On the first day of an advanced journalism class in early 2002, she threw her arms up in the air when her name was called and announced: "I'm pregnant!" Her professor, Wilma Wirt, who was leading the class that day at Virginia Commonwealth University, recalled, "I've never seen anybody that wanted something as much."

But Wirt and several classmates grew concerned whenever Stewart-McKinnie talked about her boyfriend. Her descriptions seemed to suggest that he had another life. "There was something that just didn't feel right about it," Wirt recalled.

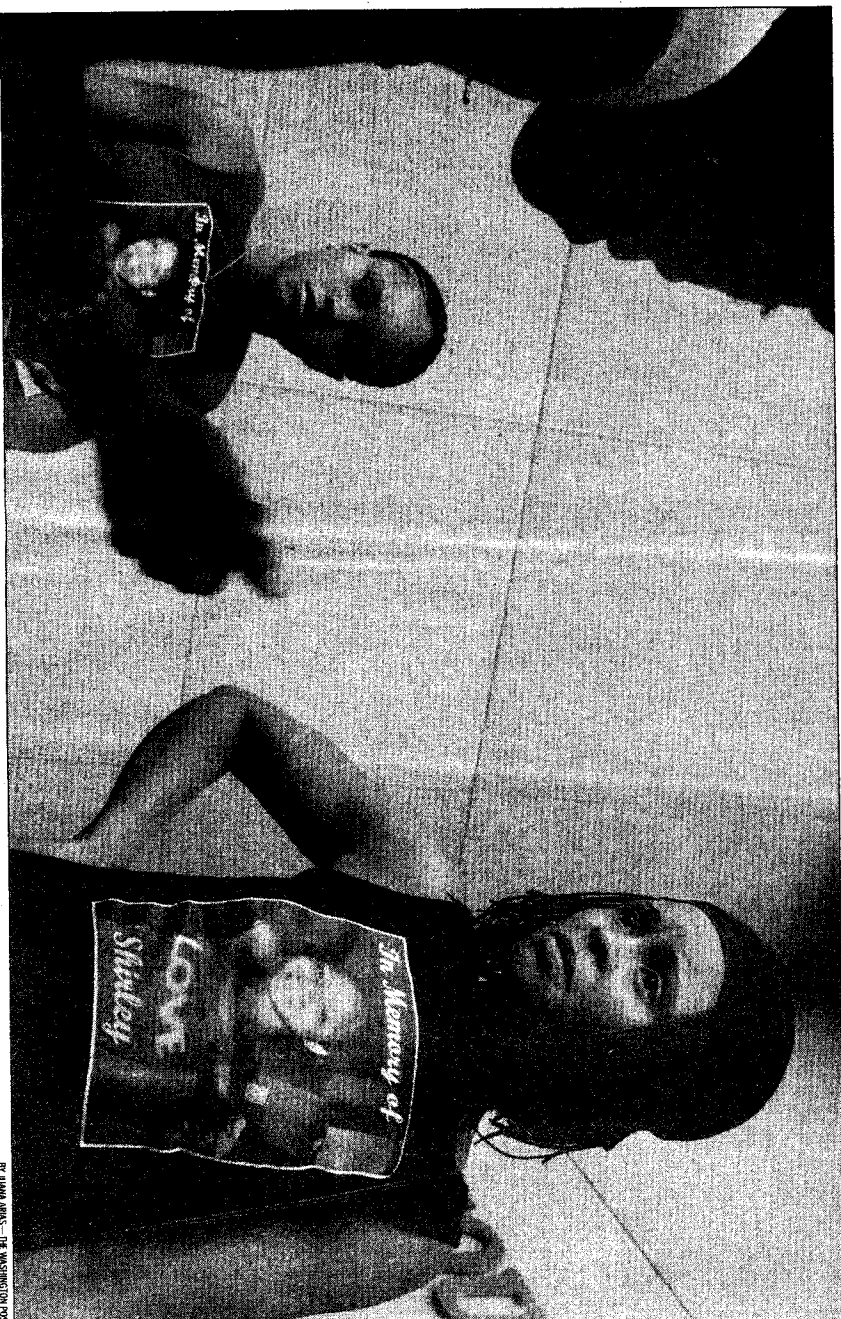
Still, Stewart-McKinnie reveled in the pregnancy, sang the baby lullabies and by five months along had chosen a name for the girl she was expecting—Amaria Kima. She bought dresses and sleepers and diapers. After her second ultrasound, she made it clear that she would be expecting child support, police say.



Fifteen-year-old Sherrita Colon poses with her newborn daughter, Destiny ...



... who leans on the shoulder of her grandmother Tawana Colon.



Sherrita Colon's mother, Tawana Colon, right, and sister, Tysia Colon, talk with Catina Edwards, left, at court in the District while awaiting the sentencing of Dante Allen in Sherrita's killing.

cases were then researched in detail to understand more about how and why they happened.

was still a lot of hatred," Sherry Culp's mother said. In court documents, a Browne troop leader described an argument during pregnancy remains unstated.

every kind to pregnant women—about drinking alcohol, about the side effects of aspirin and cough syrup—the risk of homicide during pregnancy remains unstated.

Fletcher Johnson Educational Center. He did not seem violent or dangerous in any way, her mother said. Allen had little to do with Sherrita's

child support, police say.

Her boyfriend, Willis E. Anderson, 27, was married. He had met Stewart-McKinzie years earlier, growing up in the same rough Richmond neighborhood. They had been intimate on and off. But now he had a schoolteacher wife, a young son, a college degree, a comfortable house in the suburbs and a good job as an accountant in state government.

On the evening of April 10, 2002, prosecutors said, Anderson arranged to have Stewart-McKinzie meet him about a mile from her Richmond apartment. She parked her car and climbed into his Chevrolet Suburban. It is unclear where she thought they were going.

In a wooded area, prosecutors said, Stewart-McKinzie understood her peril, jumped out and tried to flee. But it was completely dark, and as she ran—wearing a sundress and a jean jacket—she lost her shoes and her glasses.

Turkey hunters happened upon her body three days later. She had been struck at least 25 times with a heavy tool or hammer.

He was worried [the pregnancy] was going to interfere with his lifestyle," prosecutor Michael V. Gerard said. "She was going to have this baby. She was going to hit him for child support. It was definitely going to interrupt his way of life."

After listening to the evidence, a jury voted to convict Anderson, who is serving a 50-year term. In an interview from a prison in southern Virginia, he continued to maintain his innocence—and said Stewart-McKinzie never told him the baby was his. "If it were mine, I would have to own up to it and tell my wife I was cheating..." he said. "I'm going to take care of my responsibilities. I'm not going to kill anybody."

Stewart-McKinzie's death came with such horror and pain that her aunt said she has now turned her own life around, opening five homes to help shelter women in need. She calls her program "Ceceata's House."

"People need to know," Stewart said, reflecting on how violence sometimes gets handed down in a family, repeated and suffered again and again. "I think it's generational," she said, "and I believe you need to break the cycle."

Stewart pointed to a jagged scar on her upper arm. She has more on her abdomen—cruel reminders of the day, 17 years ago, when she was attacked in a domestic clash.

"I was stabbed seven times while I was pregnant," Stewart said, remembering how she held her own intestine as she was rushed to a hospital. "The only difference between me and my niece is that I lived and she died."

'Still a Lot of Hatred'

The killing of Ceceata Stewart-McKinzie was one of at least 48 maternal homicides in Virginia since 1990, according to The Post's analysis. Identifies of the dead could be pieced together for 45 cases. The

happened.

Spread across the state, slightly fewer than half the homicides happened in cities such as Richmond. That's where Gwendolyn Thomas, 17, grew up. She was killed in 1992 by a youth minister she had admired at her church. He had fathered the child she was expecting and did not want the baby's paternity to be known, prosecutors said.

A third occurred in rural enclaves, like where Tabitha Jo Bell was killed in 1993 when she was seven months pregnant. She and her live-in-boyfriend were arguing about how often he was going out when he picked up a shotgun and fired at her as she cooked dinner.

About 20 percent of women were killed in suburbs. Ana Diaz, 28, was shot in her car in Reston as 1998 at four months pregnant. Police said it appeared that her former boyfriend was angry that Diaz had moved on after their breakup, expecting a baby with another man. He killed her, then turned the gun on himself.

In Virginia, 12 of the 45 cases have gone unsolved—among them, the death of Sherry Culp, who lived in Stafford County.

For Culp, pregnancy came both as a surprise and a new source of tension, but not because the baby's father had objections. Her family said the estrain was with her ex-husband, whom she had divorced several years earlier, not long after she had an extra-marital affair.

At 36, Culp lived with her fiancé and had been trying to get joint custody of her two daughters, then 7 and 9. The timing of her pregnancy was not what she had planned. Money was tight, and she worked full time, and she was trying to demonstrate her stability for the court. She briefly wondered whether to continue the pregnancy, said her mother, Jane Young.

By the first days of 1998, however, she was several weeks from her due date and excited. She had prepared the baby's nursery and washed and folded baby clothes. Her green winter parka would no longer zip over her bulging midsection. Early labor pains had started. She expected to deliver early—as she had with her daughters.

Her relationship with her ex-husband, Donald Culp, remained strained. He lived with another woman by then, but "there

monter said. In court documents, a Browne troop leader described an argument between the couple when Donald allegedly told Sherry she would never have custody of the girls, and he would see her dead before she had another child."

One Friday, Culp spent the day training the worker who would replace her while she was on maternity leave from the Springfield electronics firm where she worked. She left later than usual, with a fellow employee, police said. They climbed at the front entrance to the buildings, then parted ways.

Culp went straight to her car, about 100 feet away.

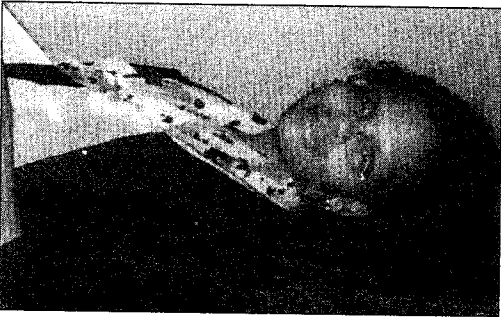
A sudden snap of gunfire brought her co-workers heading toward her car. They spotted a man in a hooded sweat shirt walking away. When they got to Culp, they found her slumped behind the wheel. She was hit before she could get her key in the ignition—shot twice in the head through the car window in what police suspected was a targeted killing.

Doctors performed an emergency C-section and delivered 6-pound 6-ounce Kelsey Morgan Laughlin. Having gone too long without oxygen, Culp's daughter showed no brain activity and was disconnected from a respirator two days later.

"The little girl was buried in her mother's arms. 'Had she not gotten pregnant, she might be here today,'" said Jane Young, her mother. "That's what I live with every day. I really believe that Kelsey was the driving force behind this murder."

In 2002, police served a search warrant on Donald Culp's home outside Cleveland, where he moved after the slaying. Leads in the case—being investigated as a murder-for-hire—are still being pursued, said Detective Steve Mifflin of the Fairfax County Police Department.

Donald Culp's attorney, Jay Milano, has said that Culp had nothing to do with the homicide and that although relations had once been bitter between the Culp's, they were getting along well at the time of Sherry's death. "There's no evidence that he killed his wife, because he didn't kill his wife," Milano told The Post in 2002. He did not return calls last week.



Ceceata Stewart-McKinzie was ecstatic about the pending arrival of her baby, but her marriage, sometimes-boyfriend was not. He's serving a 50-year term for killing her.

Embracing a New Life

In a society that issues warnings of ev-

drinking alcohol, about the side effects of aspirin and cough syrup—the risk of homicide during pregnancy remains unstated and unclear, even as early research may indicate certain groups of women may be more vulnerable—teenagers, for example.

In a 2002 analysis in Massachusetts, women ages 15 to 24 were three times more likely to die of homicide during pregnancy and postpartum months than their older counterparts.

The results were similar to a Maryland study in 2000 that found that black pregnant teenagers were most at risk.

"It's something we need to look into more," said author Cara Krulwich, wondering, "Is there a vulnerability factor we don't know about? Is there a social factor?"

In a study of postpartum women in Georgia done by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, mothers younger than 20 were almost three times as likely to be killed by homicide as their counterparts who had not recently been pregnant.

Under the most recent public health definitions, deaths up to 12 months postpartum are considered "associated" with pregnancy. Sometimes experts look into cases to determine whether pregnancy was a factor—and if a death might have been prevented.

In the District, Shirrita Colon was just 14 when she found out she was pregnant. Her mother was not happy about it but concluded that it was a young girl's mistake, an accident. "You do what you feel you can live with," she told her daughter. "I want my baby," the teenager told her with certainty.

Her older sister had given birth at 15, and Shirley admired the way she had been a mother and still managed to make great things happen in her life, with shelves of trophies in the family's District apartment and a track scholarship to George Mason University.

Their mother told Shirley she would help with the baby as long Shirley continued her education.

Shirley promised to return to classes after her baby was born. Having just completed ninth grade, she was still unclear about what she wanted in life. Maybe fashion design—she had created her own gown for the eighth-grade prom—maybe something else entirely. Everyone told her she had a gift for comedy, the ability to make even her most reluctant friends laugh.

During her pregnancy, Shirley stayed close to home, in the family's third-floor apartment in Benning Terrace. She kept her doctor appointments, took her vitamins and watched the movies that the prenatal clinic showed on parenting, her mother said.

did not seem violent or dangerous in any way, her mother said.

Allen had little to do with Shirley during her pregnancy, and when she delivered her daughter Feb. 28, 2002, he was not around.

Shirley named the infant Destiny, decided to breastfeed her, thinking it was best for her baby, and doted on her "like a baby doll," her mother said.

She was changing her clothes three or four times a day, her mother, Iawana Colon, recalled.

In the weeks after Destiny's birth, Allen dropped by briefly once or twice. "I don't think he believed Destiny was his," her mother said. Then, one Sunday in May, he stopped by again, and he and Shirley talked in a stairwell outside her family's apartment. They began to argue. One neighbor said Shirley asked him for money for Pampers.

Shortly afterward, Shirley asked her sister to watch the baby for five minutes, ran outside and climbed into a car with Allen and a friend.

The three drove behind a church—where Allen pulled out a gun.

At first, Shirley thought he was joking, according to court testimony. Then she ran. As she tried to jump a fence, Allen, 17, shot her in the head. When she fell to the ground, he stood over her and shot her again.

By the time her family arrived, police lights were flashing and yellow tape was strung around the crime scene. Iawana Colon screamed and tried to push through the police barricade to reach her daughter. Finally, she dropped to her knees, she recalled, and prayed: "God, let this not be true."

It was Mother's Day—and Shirley had been a mother just 10½ weeks.

At Allen's trial, prosecutors said the teenager was so deliberate about the killing that he had taken off a favorite football jersey so it wouldn't get bloodstained. One friend testified that Allen had explained the shooting a few days afterward by saying, "I'm too young to be a father."

Shirley's mother said that the family had never asked for child support and that she had not imagined he could pay anything, at 17 years old. Shirley, she said, "trusted this guy. I believe my baby died in shock, not believing he would do something like this to her. That's what hurts me so bad."

The jury came back with a guilty verdict, on a charge of first-degree murder, and in July 2003 Allen was sentenced to 45 years in prison. Shirley's father, Isaac Colon II, stood outside the courthouse, feeling little satisfaction. "It's not enough," he said. "My daughter doesn't have a life. Destiny doesn't have a mother for the rest of her life."



Donald Allen lived behind a church and killed her.

Staff writer David S. Pollis and staff researcher Bobbie Pratt contributed to this report.



PHOTOS BY JUANITA ARIAS—THE WASHINGTON POST

Sandra Adams and the 5-year-old grandson she is raising, Chancellor Lee Adams. She calls the two of them the "dream team."

Mending Shattered Childhoods

Newborns, Siblings and Substitute Caregivers Endure Reminders of Loss

Last of three articles

By DONNA ST. GEORGE
Washington Post Staff Writer

CHARLOTTE

Chancellor Lee Adams sat on his mother's grave, gazing at the bronze marker that bore her name. It was his birthday, and he had just turned 5, which was exactly how many years it had been since the shooting that took her life.

With one arm around his back, his grandmother gestured at a lush bouquet they had brought. "Look at your mommy's flowers," she said. Chancellor smiled.

Five years earlier, he was delivered from his mortally wounded mother in an emer-

■ **Fairfax man indicted in slaying of pregnant girlfriend.** | Page A17

gency Caesarean section—10 weeks premature and blue from lack of oxygen. The trauma left him with cerebral palsy. He wears braces on his legs, needs help to walk and speaks only a handful of words.

"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you," his grandmother sang to him at the graveside. "Happy birthday, dear Chancellor. . ."

It has been like this, death and birth inextricably bound, since his famous father arranged the killing of his mother. Rae Carruth was an all-American wide receiver, a \$3.7 million, first-round draft pick for the Carolina Panthers. Now he is in prison, convicted of conspiracy in the 1999 killing of Cherica Adams.

Chancellor's grandmother showed him the big purple balloons they had brought for the occasion—each tagged with a small



Adams, from right, Chancellor and friends Kia Quick, Najah Quick, 5, and Judy Williams, standing, at the grave of Chancellor's mother, Cherica Adams.

See DEATHS, A16, Col. 1

PREGNANCY AND HOMICIDE | *The Legacy*

For Children Left Behind, Haunting Reminders

DEATHS, From A1

photo of Cherica and a verse from the Bible. One by one, they released the balloons into the cloudy November sky.

"I love you, Mommy," his grandmother offered.

Chancellor broke into a wide smile. "Yeaaaah," he said.

'It Was a Miracle'

No one knows exactly how many children like Chancellor are rescued from the wombs of their dying mothers.

But it happened in 2000 when Yolanda Coles, 34, was eight months pregnant and fatally shot outside her Richmond apartment. It happened in 2002 when Tara Chambers, 29, was shot in her Concord, N.C., home and in 1998 when Sherry Culp, 36, was shot outside her workplace in Springfield.

Sometimes these children do not survive. Doctors rush to save them, and families pray, but they die because the trauma has been too much. Culp's daughter lived two days. Chambers's daughter lived on for 33 days. "They tried everything they could," recalled grandmother Johnnie Tucker, "but we had to give up."

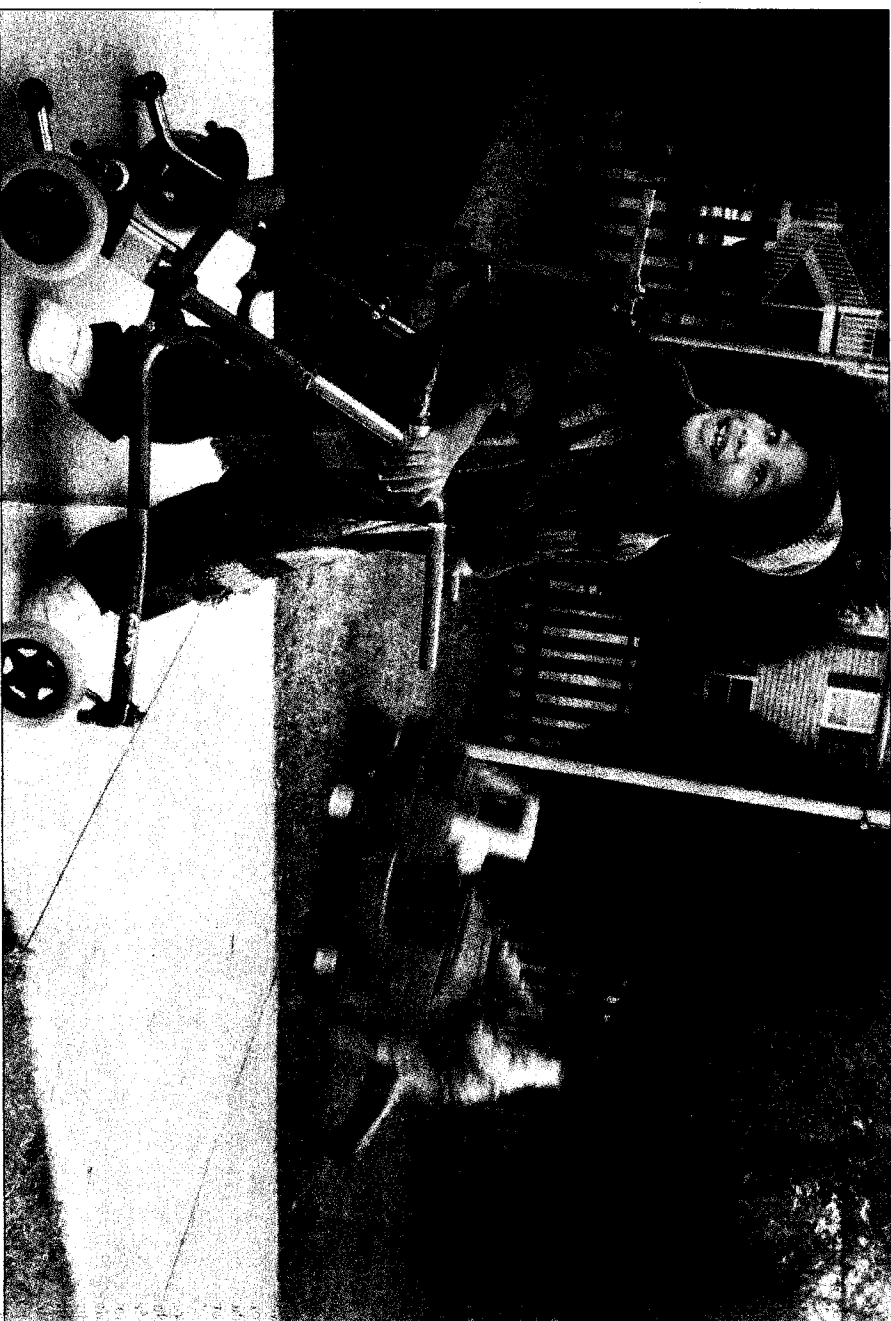
In other cases, children make it but face debilitating injuries. In Portsmouth, Va., Breonna McKee survived her pregnant mother's shooting in 2002 but suffered brain damage from lack of oxygen. She still does not walk, talk or swallow. She has had pneumonia four times, falling so ill her grandmother LouAnne Sweet has wondered, "Is she really going to make it?" Breonna is doing better lately, the family says, but everything is one day at a time.

Then, against the odds, there are such children as Ter-ton Marquise Oglesby.

His mother, Danita Oglesby, 29, was severely wounded in a stabbing in Atlanta when she was four months pregnant. After three months in a coma, she went into labor. Ter-ton was delivered without complications, a healthy baby boy.

"It was a miracle," said his grandmother Carolyn Oglesby, who recalled that tears ran down her daughter's face when the baby was placed on her chest in the hospital, even though she was still in a coma. Seven weeks after Ter-ton's birth, Danita Oglesby died.

A Washington Post examination of maternal homicides—which used death-record data to document more than 1,367 killings of pregnant women and postpartum mothers nationwide—found that one legacy of these homicides is a population of children left to face almost unimaginable consequences. Their mothers



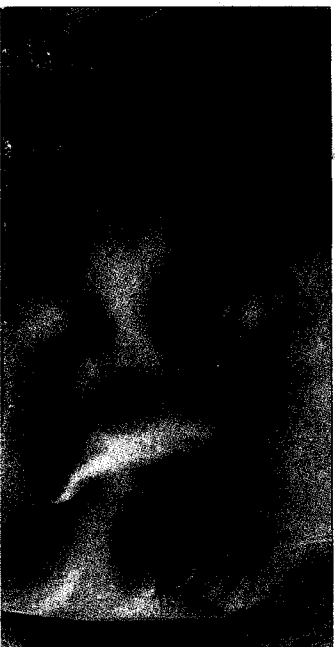
Chancellor Adams was born 10 weeks premature after an emergency C-section and was left with cerebral palsy. He uses his walker so well that he can dash across the playground.

PHOTOS BY JAMIA ABRAHAM—THE WASHINGTON POST

time. Carruth had many other girlfriends. In spring 1999, Adams found out she was pregnant—and both of them were surprised. Adams took eight home-pregnancy tests before she was convinced, her mother said.

Carruth seemed happy at first. Adams told her mother, but then he asked her to get an abortion, Adams said no.

Once pregnant, she grew to like the idea—playing tapes of Mozart for her fetus, drinking high-protein smoothies and shopping until she acquired a full baby wardrobe from birth to toddler sizes. "She wanted this to be the perfect baby," recalled her mother. "She was forever rubbing her belly and showing us."



in the trunk of a car. In the end, he was convicted on charges of conspiracy to commit murder, shooting into an occupied car and using a gun to try to kill an unborn child. He was acquitted of first-degree murder.

After he was sentenced to nearly 19 years in prison, he told CNN/Sports Illustrated that he had not been involved. "I feel guilty about none of it," he said. He said that his relationship with Adams had been overstated and that he did not know her last name until Lamaze class. "We were never boyfriend and girlfriend. ... We slept together."

His attorney, David Rudolf, recently filed another appeal on Carruth's behalf.

uation of children left to face almost unimaginable consequences. Their mothers are gone. Many fathers are in prison or dead. Their extended families are deep in grief and often reeling financially.

Babies are born in this moment of horror. More often, there are older siblings. In Virginia alone, 68 children were left behind after the killing of their pregnant or postpartum mothers since 1990. The Post's analysis shows. Nationally, in one year—2002—there were at least an additional 62 of these children.

Some of them struggle not just with loss, but also with memory. They witnessed their mother's death, or awoke in the morning to discover her body.

Sally Blakey said her 5-year-old grandson had seen enough violence in the house before his mother's killing to imagine it. Erskine Blakey, 22, of Richmond was postpartum with twins and trying to leave the abusive father of her four children when he strangled her.

For weeks, the 5-year-old carried his mother's picture around the house, dwelling on how he might have saved her. His grandmother recalled: "I had to tell him, Baby, you were only 5. There was nothing you could have done."

The hurt of it all is too intense to ever go away, said Georgia Simmons. Now 62, she has been raising her grandson for nearly 14 years, since the day her pregnant daughter was shot in Richmond and her baby survived an emergency Cesarean section. Christmas are still hard—she can hardly bear to hear the carols that her daughter loved—but January is difficult, too: the anniversary of Deborah Randall's slaying.

'I've Been Shot'

Every death day of hers is a birthday of his, she said. "It hits my gut very deep."

Back in 1999, Chancellor Lee Adams might have seemed bound for a life of privilege and possibility. His father had been widely seen as the future of the Carolina franchise after distinguishing himself as a leading National Football League rookie. Chancellor's mother was a one-time model who attended college for two years, then returned to Charlotte to try her hand in real estate and business.

The couple met at a summer pool party. Cherita Adams had socialized with other athletes, but when she met Carruth, she called her mother, Sandra Adams, and said, "Mom, I've just met my soul mate."

That night, she brought him home to meet her father.

Their relationship was off and on, however. Cherita Adams went to Atlanta for a

called her mother. "She was forever rubbing her belly and showing us."

The couple's relationship was rocky through much of her pregnancy. Adams "didn't want to just be Number 1 but the only one," her mother said. For a time, they barely talked. Carruth changed his phone number, then took Adams to task for not calling her mother said. "He kept making and breaking dates," she said. "He was Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

At some point, Cherita Adams made it clear she would be seeking child support from Carruth. The prosecutor argued that Carruth was deeply opposed to supporting the child of a woman he was no longer with.

In mid-November 1999, Carruth called Adams to say he wanted to make things right, her mother said. He led her to believe that they were going to be a family. He went to a Lamaze class. He couldn't change. Adams told her mother hopefully.

"She wanted so much to be a couple, and I think it was because I was a single parent," Sandra Adams said. "She really wanted to be married and be a family."

On a Monday in November, Carruth called and asked Cherita for a "real date" to a movie—"The Bone Collector."

After the movie, Carruth and Adams were in separate cars, heading back toward Adams's apartment. According to prosecutors, Carruth led her down a dark road, where he slowed or stopped his SUV. With Adams blocked in, a car with three men pulled alongside her BMW 325 and fired through her window.

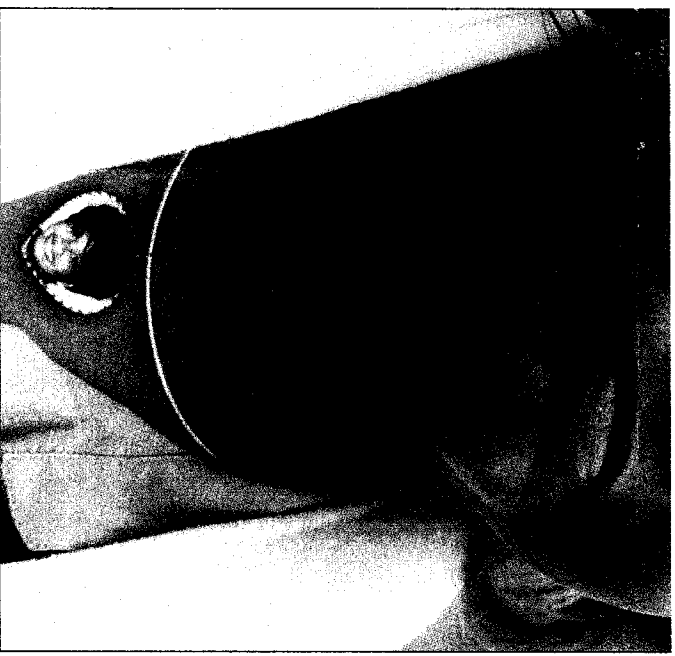
Shot four times and bleeding, Adams called 911 on her cell phone. "I've been shot," she said.

"You've been shot?" a 911 operator asked. "...I'm eight months pregnant," she said.

"How'd this happen?" a 911 medic inquired. "I was following my baby's daddy, Rae Carruth, the football player."



Cherita Adams, 24, was killed by hit men. The father of her unborn baby is in prison.



Though the experts believe Chancellor cannot be "cured," Sandra Adams says her faith leads her to disavow. "We believe he's on the road to a full recovery," she says.

rolologist showed Sandra Adams scans of Chancellor's brain. The damage was widespread, she recalled. "They were painting a very bleak picture of his development. They made it sound like he would never be able to walk or talk."

Different Triumphs

Five years after his mother was shot, Chancellor Adams set with eight classmates and their teachers in a bright classroom with shapes and numbers and letters on the walls. A large chocolate birthday cake sat before him, his grandmother nearby.

One boy asked about a small photo pinned to Chancellor's brand-new moss green sweater.

"That's his mommy," his grandmother said. "She died," the classmate said, knowingly. Soon the cake was aglow with a large candle shaped like a 5, and the singing started and Chancellor himself was aglow, listening. When everyone clapped, Chancellor clapped with them.

The little boy asked about the photo again. "How did his mother die?" Chancellor's grandmother paused, then said: "His mother got shot with a gun. Somebody was very bad."

This is a fact of Chancellor's life. It is why he has cerebral palsy, why his legs need braces and why his triumphs are

His attorney, David Rudolf, recently filed another appeal on Carruth's behalf. Rudolf maintains that Carruth is innocent. "He was found not guilty of the murder," Rudolf said in an interview. "He is not guilty of the conspiracy. He had no intention of hurting Cherita Adams." About Chancellor, the attorney said: "Clearly he feels terrible about how Chancellor is. What human being wouldn't be?" He added, "You look at Chancellor and you see Rae."

Just a year ago, Sandra Adams won a judgment of nearly \$5.8 million in a civil suit she filed against Carruth and the three other men convicted in the case. The award came after Carruth decided not to contest the suit, but it may be mostly symbolic because Carruth and the others have no money that can be found, Adams said.

For Chancellor's sake and her own, and in keeping with her Christian beliefs, she said she has forgiven Carruth. "I'm raising his son, and I can't hold on to hateful feelings for him and raise his son," she said. Still, she added: "Justice needs to be served and is being served. I hold him accountable."

Adams stayed home with Chancellor for his first couple of years but is back at work now, supporting herself and her grandson—"a challenge," she said. It helps that a close friend, Judy Williams, helps care for Chancellor when he is in school. Williams is a founder of Mothers of Murdered Offspring—in which Adams has become active.

Chancellor's birthday fell on the organization's annual Thanksgiving fellowship dinner and night of remembrance. So the birthday that started at the cemetery ended at a church hall in downtown Charlotte, where, one by one, grieving families lit a candle and spoke a few words about their slain relatives.

When it was her turn, Adams introduced Chancellor. "Today is a bitter-sweet day for us," she said, "because it is five years ago today that my daughter was gunned down and today is also his birthday, his fifth birthday."

She set her lit candle beside a photograph of her daughter.

Just before the podium to talk about Chancellor, she asked the boy and his family to come forward. Through Chancellor, she said, "I've learned that there is a God up above, and He determines who lives and who doesn't."

The applause was loud. Then, for one last time on his fifth birthday, Chancellor listened to the sounds of "Happy Birthday," this time delivered by a crowd of 200. When it ended, his grandmother asked Chancellor in a voice that the whole room could hear: "How are you?"

Chancellor spoke proudly. "Good," he said.

Staff writer David S. Pattis and staff research Bobbie Pratt contributed to this report.

PREGNANCY AND HOMICIDE | *The Legacy*

Bittersweet Childhoods of Love and Loss

Grandmother Tries
To Raise Young Girls
As Daughter WishedBy DONNA ST. GEORGE
Washington Post Staff Writer

For reasons that many families marvel over, some babies are born with few physical problems in spite of violent attacks on their mothers. Victoria Martin was delivered that way after an emergency Caesarean section in Fayetteville, N.C., in 2002.

Her mother, Brandy Martin, had been severely beaten with a baseball bat when she was 29 weeks pregnant. Within hours, doctors delivered the baby—3 pounds 5 ounces and premature, but ultimately healthy.

Her mother had picked her name, and it was Victoria," said her grandmother Reba Skaggs, "and it's so appropriate because she's a little victory baby."

Brandy Martin was a second-year law student who married her high school sweetheart, started a family, became involved in her church and worked toward a career as a prosecutor. The summer before her death, she was an intern in the district attorney's office.

The Martins had been through some troubles in their marriage, including a suicide attempt by Geoff Martin. But relatives and police said nothing suggested the violence of May 4, 2002, when Geoff attacked Brandy while she was sleeping. Brandy lived for six days in the hospital.

With their mother dead and their father in prison, Victoria, now 2½, and her sister, Alyssa, 6, are being raised by Skaggs, 52, who said the blessing of a healthy birth has been



Victoria Martin, who weighed 3 pounds 5 ounces at birth, grasps the finger of her grandmother Reba Skaggs during the first hours after her premature birth.

mingled with the most intense grief she has known.

"The worst time is at night, because everything is quiet and dark and your mind goes crazy," she said. One recent night, she recalled, Alyssa approached her grandmother tearfully and announced: "It's been so long since I heard my mommy's voice. I don't think I remember it."

Skaggs was devastated. She had kept photographs

of Brandy in the house but had not thought to keep Alyssa connected to the sound of her voice. So Skaggs dug out videotapes of Brandy delivering legal arguments for class.

Alyssa watched with excitement, unphobed by the dry subject matter. "Now I remember," she exclaimed. She still asks, "Can I see



Victoria Martin is "a little victory baby," says her grandmother.

Mommy at work?

For a long time Skaggs said, she had a hard time disciplining Alyssa. "I felt like she lost everything in her life, and I just couldn't," she recalled. "I didn't want her to feel any more sadness."

Skaggs said she still talks about Brandy in present tense, because she is a strong part of her granddaughters' lives. Before bed every night, Alyssa and Victoria kiss their mother's photograph. When they pray to God, they ask, "The next time you see Mommy, can you give her a kiss for us?"

When they have a free day, Skaggs takes the girls to their mother's grave site. Sometimes they bring a picnic lunch. The girls run from one

dogwood to another, chase and play. Their father, Geoff, is an ex-Marine who served as a deacon in his church, a likable man who worked for an industrial supply company and had just been promoted at work.

The evening before the killing, his wife made him a congratulatory cake, and the family went out to dinner to celebrate his promotion and the completion of Brandy's final exams at law school. Police said Geoff had no explanation for the beating and no apparent history of spousal abuse. He is in prison for life and declined to be interviewed.

Victoria is still too young to ask many questions about what happened. But Alyssa was 3½ years old—and in another bedroom—the night of her mother's killing. She heard the police banging on the door, saw the tears and never saw either parent again.

What she knows, Skaggs said, is that "Mommy got hurt really bad, and the police had to help us. Daddy had to go away." Mommy, she believes, is in Heaven. She is unclear about Daddy, and Skaggs intends to keep it that way until she is older. "She thinks she has the best daddy in the whole world," she said.

Skaggs has struggled to pick up where Brandy left off with her daughters. She sends Alyssa to a private Christian school because Brandy wanted that, even though it costs more than Skaggs can afford. She has revealed in Victoria's first tooth, first step, first word.

But she constantly thinks of how Brandy should be enjoying her children. "The brain just won't shut off when you go through something like this," she said. "The first thing we do about everything is cry.... Absolutely everything is bittersweet."

Staff researcher Bobbie Pratt contributed to this report.



Brandy Martin, shown with her daughter, Alyssa, was a law student who hoped to become a prosecutor. Her husband, Geoff Martin, who had been her high school sweetheart, is serving life.

About This Series

SUNDAY

The Toll: Researchers are just beginning to discover what has been a hidden risk of pregnancy: Pregnant women and new mothers are more likely to be victims of homicide than to die of any single natural cause, several statewide studies have shown.

WEDNESDAY

The Victims: As public health experts focus new attention on homicide during pregnancy, the Washington region has become a focal point. Research rarely casts light on the lives of those who were slain or how violence entered their lives at such a pivotal time.

TODAY

The Legacy: The tragedy of maternal homicide lingers in the lives of children left behind, some of them born as their mothers were dying. Older siblings sometimes witness the violence. The children often must be raised by their grandparents.

washingtonpost.com

On The Web: The previous articles in this series and a video of Madonna Stewart and women who are in the shelters she has established in Richmond can be found at www.washingtonpost.com/metro.

Boyfriend Indicted in Slaying Of Girlfriend, Fetus in Fairfax

By TOM JACKMAN
Washington Post Staff Writer

A man suspected of fatally shooting his pregnant girlfriend last month was indicted yesterday by a Fairfax County grand jury on charges of first-degree murder and the unlawful killing of a fetus—charges for which the county prosecutor said he would not seek the death penalty.

Slawmire Fulton, 21, had told family members that her due date was today and that she was carrying a healthy girl. But about 1:30 a.m. Thanksgiving morning, she was shot in the back next to a shelter in Mount Vernon Woods Park. She was pronounced dead at the scene, and the fetus could not be saved, police said.

Fairfax police immediately turned their attention to Fulton's boyfriend and the father of her child, Darius T. Hicks, 31. Six months earlier, Hicks had been arrested on charges of abducting and assaulting Fulton, court records show. But Fulton declined to press charges, and Hicks was released.

When Hicks wasn't located quickly after Fulton's slaying, Fairfax police called on deputy U.S. marshals and a regional fugitive task force to help find him. On Dec. 9, agents found Hicks in jail in Jacksonville, Fla., using his brother's name.

Commonwealth's Attorney Robert R. Horan Jr. said he will not pursue a capital murder charge against Hicks, even though the General Assembly added language to the capital murder statute in 1997 that includes "willful deliberate and premeditated



Darius T. Hicks is accused of fatally shooting his girlfriend Thanksgiving day in Mount Vernon Woods Park.

killing of a pregnant woman." Horan noted that the law also requires that the killer have "the intent to cause the involuntary termination of the woman's pregnancy without a live birth."

Horan said of Hicks, "There's no evidence that his reason for doing this killing was to kill the fetus." He said that unless Hicks made statements or left other indicators that he specifically wanted Fulton's baby killed, there is not sufficient proof for a capital murder charge.

Fulton's family noted that anyone who knowingly kills a pregnant woman logically must know that the fetus will also die. But Horan said more proof is needed to make the leap from inferring a killer's intent to proving it.

"I think he should face the death penalty," Fulton's mother, Celia Alvarez, said of Hicks. "He took her and my grandchild. She didn't do anything to harm the man. She was a

nice, calm woman. He did not have to kill her."

Fulton's family is caring for her two surviving children.

Horan said he will make use of a statute passed by abortion opponents in the General Assembly this year. That law condemns the deliberate and malicious killing of a fetus. If premeditation can be proved, the penalty is 20 years to life in prison, the equivalent of first-degree murder. Horan said he would seek that penalty for the killing of the fetus.

A new study by The Washington Post found that 1,367 pregnant women and new mothers have been slain nationwide since 1990, about two-thirds by gunfire. At least 48 of those occurred in Virginia. And a 2001 study in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that in Maryland, a pregnant or recently pregnant woman is more likely to be a victim of homicide than to die of any other cause.

Hicks remains in jail in Duval County, Fla. He was pulled over by Jacksonville sheriff's deputies late Dec. 6 on a routine traffic stop. A check of his Maryland license plates revealed that the car had been reported stolen. Police subsequently learned that the Dodge Shadow he was driving wasn't really stolen, and the charge was dropped Friday.

But Hicks continues to be held in Florida on a misdemeanor narcotics warrant from Port Landerdale and a federal misdemeanor probation violation from Alexandria. It was not clear yesterday when he might be returned to Virginia to face the murder charges.

Baby Cut From Mother's Womb Leaves Hospital

New York Daily News

SKIDMORE, Mo., Dec. 20—The infant snatched from her mother's womb went home Monday night with her grieving father.

"She is just a beautiful, beautiful baby girl," Carol Wheeler, a spokeswoman for Stormont-Vail Regional Health Center in Topeka, Kan., said of the 4-day-old infant.

Victoria Jo was released from the hospital the night before her mother, Bobbie Jo Stinnett, 23, was set to be buried in Skidmore.

Her father, Zeb Stinnett, had barely left the preemie's bedside, except to make final arrangements for his high school sweetheart.

Seeing his young bride in her coffin was almost more than he could bear, family members said.

"It doesn't even look like her," he told his father after visiting the body, according to his grandmother, Jo Ann Stinnett.

As the Stinnetts clan prepared to say goodbye to Bobbie Jo Stinnett, the woman accused of killing her first courtroom appearance.

Lisa Montgomery, 36, is accused

of scheming her way into Stinnett's home, strapping her from behind and then slicing out her 8-month-old fetus. She is being charged with kidnapping resulting in death.

Montgomery fled to her home in eastern Kansas, where she pretended she had just given birth to the infant—fooling her husband and her pastor, investigators said.

"My family has suffered a tragedy, but I am not the only family," Kevin Montgomery said outside the courthouse where his wife appeared Monday. "Zeb and Victoria Jo have a rough road to go."

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